

A visit to 'Surovi' – a CLC

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One sunny, bright day in December 2007, I visited the Computer Learning Center (CLC) sponsored by VAB-NJ at Surovi School, in Dhaka. Dhanmondi used to be, if not still, the prime residential area in Dhaka. Although it has lost some of its down-to-earth serenity of single or two-storied homes around a placid lake and replaced by the glass and steel luster of high-rise apartments, Dhanmondi still is a desirable place to live and raise a family. Considering that the CLP initiative of VAB-NJ espouses helping underprivileged school-going children and bringing computer literacy within their grasp, a center in Dhanmondi may seem misplaced. However, even a cursory look around Dhanmondi brings into view homelessness and quite a few child workers toiling at homes and shops. Most live in nearby slums. The slum dwellers are not on the rolls of Government census and consequently not counted or covered by the free primary school program of the Government. Surovi stepped in to fill this gap.



books and book bags. They gather in a two-storied house, a rarity in Dhanmondi.

I was led to the roof of the house where they have built a room for the computer class. Two desks contained two PCs on each and two students poured onto a PC working the keyboard and mouse. They were boys and girls working together. I found the students enthusiastic learners. There were a few graduates from the computer course standing together at the back. They were there at the invitation of the Principal to talk to me. They were all thankful for the training they got and talked about future benefits of it. They also talked about internet connections and how they felt that much would be accomplished if they had such. I told them that I understood their need and that it was only a logical extension of having a PC. But I also stressed to them that although we (VAB-NJ) provided PCs and facilitated installation of the PCs in their school, we were in a partnership with them; that the school, its teachers and students were partners in this project along with D-Net and VAB-NJ. They should also generate solutions to their needs and issues and just not wait for charity.



My visit was very pleasant. Looking at the students and talking to them gave me satisfaction because in my mind it generated some hope for the future in the bleakness of present-day Bangladesh.